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Senate

The Senate was not in session today. Its next meeting will be held on Monday, November 9, 2009, at 2 p.m.

House of Representatives

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 2009

The House met at 9 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. JACKSON of Illinois).

DESIGNATION OF THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
November 7, 2009.

I hereby appoint the Honorable JESSE L. JACKSON, Jr. to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

NANCY PELOSI,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Daniel P. Coughlin, offered the following prayer: Nothing genuinely human should ever fail to raise an echo in our hearts, Lord, if we are true believers in our common creation and disciples of the Supreme Master.

As members of a common humanity, our history, our origins of birth and even our different persuasions of religious belief will never dull our awareness that we are already one on a very deep level and quite interdependent upon one another.

Guide us to a greater understanding of one another. Bridge our differences with Your own powerful love for each of us.

Lift all blinders, Lord; that we may truly see one another as singular and unique yet we are able to come together, Lord, before You, with You and in You, now and forever. Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. TIM MURPHY) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. TIM MURPHY of Pennsylvania led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will entertain up to 10 requests for 1-minute speeches from each side of the aisle.

HEALTH CARE

(Ms. SCHWARTZ asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. SCHWARTZ. Mr. Speaker, finding a uniquely American solution to ensure that all Americans have access to meaningful, affordable health coverage has been an unfulfilled goal for decades. Today, we have the opportunity to make this moral and economic imperative a reality.

The Affordable Health Care for America Act meets the goals of health care reform: enhanced consumer protections for those with health coverage; new, affordable choices for individuals and small businesses; strengthening Medicare for our seniors, with better prescription drug coverage and access to primary care; improved delivery of services with better health outcomes for all Americans; and the containment of rapidly rising costs of health coverage.

It builds on America's public-private system, and it is paid for now and into the future.

The status quo is unaffordable and unsustainable. Health care reform benefits all of us: families, seniors, businesses, and the Nation. I am honored to have been a part of bringing this bill to the floor, to this historic moment, and I look forward to voting for this landmark legislation and meeting the goals of health care reform for all Americans. Now is the time to act.

HEALTH CARE

(Mr. TIM MURPHY of Pennsylvania asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. TIM MURPHY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, as we are about to deal with this health care bill before Congress, many of us have still attempted to try to improve the bill. I offered three amendments to the Rules Committee last night, and they were rejected. One of them was to say: before we cut \$500 billion out of Medicare, maybe we ought to fix it first.

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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There is a great deal of savings that could come from Medicare if we used scientific, evidence-based medicine to help improve chronic care conditions and deal with many other programs. That was rejected. Instead, we will cut the money from Medicare.

Another amendment I offered makes sure that if the Senate should move forward with their provision of allowing States to opt out, the States should also be able to opt out of paying the health care taxes. In other words, we should have no taxation without hospitalization. Instead, my fear is that high taxes will remain in the bill to the point where it is going to cost our economy more jobs and cost our small businesses more.

There still is much to do in this bill, and it is not yet ready. I still hope there is time in the coming weeks to improve these bills and work on real health care reform.

HEALTH CARE

(Mr. BLUMENAUER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, one of the strangest sights, and now a symbol of the health care debate, was the red-faced protesters, egged on by my GOP colleagues to “keep government out of their Medicare”. These people are not ignorant; they are uninformed, and unfortunately, purposely misled by some on the other side of the aisle, by Republican talking points that deny government can have a constructive role in health care, even as they rely on government for health care for seniors, veterans, emergency services and, of course, for themselves.

When most Americans are given the facts, they are pleased that it is now time to take the next steps beyond our seniors, beyond our veterans, beyond emergency services and, of course, beyond Members of Congress.

Today we can extend those benefits to more Americans while we protect those with insurance from abuse and reform a Medicare system that is in trouble. Americans await Congress to take these next critical steps to give Americans the health care they need and deserve.

UNIVERSAL GOVERNMENT-RUN VACCINE PROGRAM DISASTER

(Mr. POE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, the Federal Government promised to save the country by providing 120 million H1N1 virus vaccines in 3 months. Of course the government only made 20 percent of that number on time. So the government had to decide who would get medicine and who would not. Wall Street special interest groups got their shots, but vaccines didn't go down the street to hospitals for children and pregnant women, the most vulnerable.

The Feds are also giving criminals in prison and even the terrorists at Guantanamo Bay prison flu shots while Americans who have committed no crime must get to the back of the line.

This simple shot program administered by the government is a mess and has its priorities wrong. Why? Because the government is in charge. The government decides who gets flu shots and who doesn't. Patients don't decide; doctors don't decide. This is what a universal government-run and government-rationed health care program looks like. Welcome to the future. And get to the end of the line.

And that's just the way it is.

HEALTH CARE

(Mr. DEFAZIO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, big insurance companies and their Republican allies are bitterly opposed to health care reform, and I understand their opposition. This bill will outlaw the worst and the most lucrative consumer abuses by the insurance industry. It repeals their unfair antitrust immunity. No more collusion and price-fixing to drive up your premiums. It outlaws the preexisting condition exclusion. It outlaws them from canceling your policy when you get sick, a common practice in the insurance industry. And no more small print lifetime caps that drive families to bankruptcy.

It improves Medicare coverage for all Americans and improves Medicare reimbursement for Oregon seniors and the disabled. The Republicans would have none of that. In fact, they opened new loopholes for abuses by the insurance industry by allowing them to base their national plans in the new state of the Northern Mariana Islands, which they have designated in their alternative. So when you have a complaint, you can call Jack Abramoff when he gets out of jail, and he will help you with your insurance problem. That's the Republican plan.

Our plan isn't perfect, but it is a good step toward providing affordable health care for all Americans.

HEALTH CARE

(Mr. BROUN of Georgia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BROUN of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, the American people need to know what this debate is all about. On one hand, it is a complete takeover of the health care system that the Democratic Party is proposing. On the other hand, Republicans have offered alternatives to let the patients make decisions. In fact, I offered H.R. 3889, which is totally private, doesn't raise taxes or anything else.

Their plan will destroy the economy. It will put 5.5 million people out of work. It is going to destroy the doctor-

patient relationship. Government bureaucrats will be making decisions for every patient. The American people need to understand: This is about a government takeover of the whole health care system. They need to call their congressman and say “no” to the Nancy Pelosi steamroller of socialism.

HEALTH CARE

(Mr. INSLEE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. INSLEE. Mr. Speaker, health care is not a frivolity or a recreation; it is life itself. To a woman with early-onset breast cancer, health care is life itself. To a child with juvenile-onset diabetes, health care is life itself.

It is well that we reflect how we founded this Union. We believe that all men are endowed with certain unalienable rights, and among those are the right to life—life—liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

We pass health care to honor life not just on parchment, but in practice. We pass health care because we cherish the lives of all Americans, not just our own. This is an American step in progress. It is an American right to life.

HEALTH CARE

(Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN of California. Mr. Speaker, if you want to know the ultimate option, open up this bill and look. You are required as an American citizen to buy a health insurance policy that has been okayed and only okayed by the Federal Government. If you don't, you could pay a fine, and if you don't pay that fine, you could go to prison for up to 5 years. Where is the public option? Well, if you are in prison, you are going to get free medical care. I presume that is the ultimate tragedy in this bill.

We are changing the relationship of individuals to their government. Now, for the first time in history, as a condition of remaining in the United States, you must purchase something the Federal Government requires you to under the pain of a fine, up to \$250,000, and 5 years in prison. What kind of freedom is that? What kind of public option could that possibly be?

HEALTH CARE

(Ms. KILROY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. KILROY. Mr. Speaker, this is an historic day and a very exciting day as we move towards a vote on a bill to make health care affordable and accessible for all Americans. Like you, I have been listening to my constituents. I have been hearing their stories.